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## ABSTRACT

Questions most frequently asked about teacher centers are presented in a question-answer format. The rationale of teacher centers, their relationship to the school, and how they function are discussed. Also included in discussion are financing, staffing, governance, and planning. Three active teacher centers are described. (JD)

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# Teacher Centers—Where, What, Why?

By Roy A. Edelfelt and Tamar Orvell

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,  
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Roy A. Edelfelt's middle initial stands for Alva, as in Thomas Alva Edison. Edelfelt's father hoped his son would become an engineer. Instead, he has been studying music, teaching school, playing the violin, skiing, raising four children, and inventing new vegetarian recipes. His vacations are devoted to reunions with family and friends, to researching topics like "the future" and the organization and climate of the school culture, and to returning to his roots in Denmark. Edelfelt is employed as a professional associate in the Division of Instruction and Professional Development of the National Education Association and is a member of the Columbia University chapter of PDK.

During Tamar Orvell's first visit to a teacher center she designed and built a triple-decker cardboard house for her Head Start students. She sketched the plans, learned how to use a saber saw, and cut out the parts one night from 8 to 11 p.m. The entire next hour was spent trying (unsuccessfully) to get the structure through her car door. Subsequent visits to teacher centers (as a teacher, supervisor, or advisor) have been equally exhilarating—and frustrating. Orvell is presently on the staff of the Teacher Center Project, part of NEA's National Foundation for Improvement of Education.

Series Editor, Derek L. Burleson

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## **Introduction**

**T**his book is arranged in a question-and-answer format. It includes the questions about teacher centers we hear most often from teachers and other school personnel. The answers provided come from our experience, discussions with people in teacher centers, and from extensive contact with the problems and practices of inservice teacher education in the U.S.

Interest in teacher centers has surged recently, with the advent of federal legislation that makes possible inservice education programs concerned with both curriculum and teaching strategies. Teachers, especially, regard the legislation as a potentially new approach for at least part of their inservice education. Most teachers have little or no experience with teacher centers, but they have many questions. Some of those most frequently asked are addressed here.

## Questions and Answers About Teacher Centers

**Q.** *What is a teacher center? What assumptions underlie the idea of a teacher center?*

**A.** There is no quick and easy definition of a teacher center. It is most often a place (but it could also be an idea) around which teachers gather, individually or in groups, to get help with the immediate and everyday problems they face in teaching. A teacher center is also characterized by a feeling, a feeling of being in a place where you can get advice and support from people you trust. You're there because you want to be, and the human resources you draw upon are likely to be your peers and staff, people who have no authority over you, who are not in positions to assess your capabilities and intentions, and who cannot penalize you for what you do or do not know. A teacher center is also a place where you call the shots in terms of the kinds of resources you want, rather than having them thrust upon you. In a teacher center you would not expect to hear the statement, "This works in classroom X, now use it in yours." Rather you might hear such statements as, "I'm having trouble providing for individual differences among my students . . . I need help in managing kids who are very different . . . I need materials that are tailored to varying levels of language acquisition . . . I need a range of materials that foster the development of a single concept . . . Some of the children conceptualize abstractly and I can use printed or audio materials with them, but I need things to handle, feel, and manipulate for those whose thinking style is con-

crete and material-bound." A teacher can state these needs and request specific kinds of assistance in a center where there are people who respond to and build on such requests for help.

*Q. Is the teacher center distinct from traditional inservice education? How does the teacher center provide support and respond to teachers' needs in ways that are different from the traditional approaches to inservice education?*

A. The teacher center is a distinct idea, but it is still part of a total inservice education program. It is one kind of inservice education and never should be thought of as taking over all of inservice education or satisfying all the needs that teachers have. Perhaps it is corny to say that a teacher center is of, by, and for teachers, but that is probably one of its distinguishing characteristics. The formal graduate study that many teachers undertake still has a place in inservice education. Teacher centers do not supplant graduate study. A key distinction between teacher centers as a mode of inservice education and other kinds of staff development may be that the personal and professional growth of the teacher takes precedence over school improvement. Teacher centers have a direct relationship with individual teachers, and first and foremost address those teachers' needs.

*Q. How is a teacher center's function related to overall school improvement?*

A. A direct approach to improving the school program in recent years has been to develop new courses of study and have teachers attend institutes in order to learn how to teach those new courses of study. The teacher center is what might be called an indirect approach where participants are concerned primarily with the professional well-being of the teacher, while at the same time recognizing that whatever is done to, for, or with that teacher will ultimately contribute to school improvement. What is unique about a teacher center is that it models what many educators have always found to be good teaching; that is, attending directly to the needs of the individual, whether it be a student-learner or teacher-learner, and addressing particular interests and concerns, as identified by that learner.

*Q. Do you concentrate only on the individual teacher? If a group of teachers came to a center from the same department, grade level, school, or subject, couldn't it respond to the collective needs of those teachers?*

*A.* Yes, it could respond to groups. Sometimes it happens that a group of teachers are interested in the same kinds of questions at the same time. For example, a question such as, "How do you make this junk into a car that moves?" is answered, in part, by providing support for learners to come up with their own answers. They begin to help one another in their search, and they teach one another what they come up with, according to individual background, experience, and insight. The teacher center's function, then, is to respond to the individual or collective needs of teachers as teachers see them rather than as the administrators of the school see them.

*Q. How might teacher centers relate to other kinds of inservice education?*

*A.* Teacher centers can complement and even influence other kinds of inservice education. They can radically influence the way in which a school district structures and budgets for its inservice programs, or the way in which a college of education offers field extension work or degrees.

Teacher centers can be helpful to teachers of an abstract course like high school chemistry. In such a course the teacher knows the theories, formulas, symbols, and equations. In telescoping all this into what the students ought to learn, the teacher often puts the emphasis on nomenclature and other abstractions. A teacher center could do a very effective job with teachers of chemistry by encouraging the teachers themselves to become involved in experiments of chemical phenomena that explain events of everyday life; for example, why a souffle may collapse or how paint colors are mixed. If chemistry teachers get together at a teacher center, perhaps with an industrial chemist or a university chemistry professor, they may begin to realize more of what it is like for a 17-year-old to be studying chemistry and discovering the physical world and its properties and processes. For this interaction to occur in



a teacher center there needs to be staff, human and material resources, and equipment to provide these kinds of experiences.

*Q: Which material and human resources are required in a teacher center? What kind of staff should there be? What knowledge, attitudes, and skills are needed by the staff?*

**A.** A teacher center called the Learning Exchange in Kansas City, Missouri, has on its staff an architect and a student of economics. The architect assists teachers in looking at the buildings and other structures in the community as well as the function and aesthetic value of the surrounding landscape. This resource person can help teachers with the study of art, mathematics, science, and physics. He can help teachers deal with questions like, "Why is one kind of bridge supported with an arc structure and another with suspension towers? What are the physics principles underlying these two structures?" The economist at the teacher center helps teachers deal with issues that youngsters can identify with, such as the price of groceries or bubble gum. Teachers are brought together with business people to meet and learn from each other. They explore real, everyday decision making and how personal decisions relate to economics. Both the economist and the architect involve teachers in activity-oriented experiences that the teachers in turn can adapt in their own teaching.

*Q: Is it necessary for a staff to include such specialists as an architect or an economist to ask these kinds of questions and to explore places and materials?*

**A.** Ideally, yes, because there ought to be all kinds of specialists available who can help teachers learn. For example, an architect or economist on the staff serves not only as a direct resource to teachers or students (through programs, curricula, field experiences, and trips) but as a teacher too. Their job is to assist nonspecialists in recognizing in themselves the capacity for asking questions and searching for answers. Of course, it is not possible to have an expert on every topic.

Most teachers have much more expertise, many more facets to their personalities, than are usually seen or shared with students or other teachers. One of the things you do in a teacher center is seek out the many facets, dimensions, and capabilities you may have. What's im-

portant in schools is to make available to all learners as much knowledge and expertise as possible in any given field. But experts should recognize that they can become too specialized, too remote from everyday concerns. Experts must look continuously at the society they serve.

*Q. What about the expertise of teaching? How can teachers learn from one another? How is the strategy of teaching attended to in a teacher center?*

A. Teaching, say, 26 students all at the same moment, demands high-level skills. One of the important prerequisites to being able to teach anybody is knowing something about him. We want to be careful that we don't ask people to demonstrate teaching as a performance, pure and simple, and neglect the interaction between teacher and student. The examination of strategies of teaching and looking at what is effective teaching is very much a part of the function of a teacher center. When dealing with styles of teaching, the teacher center provides a variety of possibilities, rather than prescribing a set program or rigid structure. And yet, while the center would be fluid in its offerings, it certainly adheres to some basic assumptions about the teaching and learning processes.

*Q. What can be described and planned for in setting up a teacher center? What can or must evolve?*

A. As federally funded teacher centers get underway, these are going to be important questions because the tendency usually is, in setting up a new organization, to seek stability and to standardize procedures. Things must always remain fluid and open in a dynamic, vital teacher center.

*Q. What resources, supplies, equipment, and facilities might a teacher center have?*

A. A teacher center is not always one place. Some districts have a central center with satellites in different schools. There are mobile teacher centers that operate out of vans. The central element of any teacher center is people. The center either ought to have access to or know where to find a wide variety of resources in people, places, and

things. That doesn't mean it has to be a storeroom of books or games or materials. One of the criteria for deciding what is kept in a teacher center, as opposed to a library or an instructional materials center, is to see what kind of use the center gets. It might happen that materials will get shifted from a library or materials center to the teacher center in response to the needs of teachers. If the teachers at a center get to the point where they need a drymount press, for example, then the staff should be able to locate one. The point is that the environment of a teacher center should be responsive to what is being sought.

Part of the problem with some of the National Defense Education Act funds was that they were used to put language laboratories and science and other kinds of equipment into schools without considering the needs of the teachers, simply because *someone* thought that equipment would be useful to them. Much of those materials wound up in closets and is still there. How can you determine that a piece of equipment or some kind of resource is actually needed? The drymount press is a good illustration. A few people might say that a drymount press, or a laminating machine, or a kiln is absolutely essential. It might be essential for those few people, but unless a large number of teachers want to use the equipment it probably is not worth the space it takes up and the money it costs to buy it. It might be better to know where a press is available to teachers and see how much use it gets before deciding to purchase one. In one centralized type of teacher center that serves a county with five schools spread over a wide area, there is a drymount press operated by a center staff person. The point is that the question of equipment, materials, and resources needs to be considered along with questions about staffing and staffing roles. It is not necessary for each teacher to do his own drymounting, for example, in fact, this kind of service illustrates how a teacher center can perform a lot of routine work for teachers. Included in the resources a teacher center has access to are museums, art galleries, cultural centers, warehouses, and industry. These places often can provide a service or become a resource for a teacher center.

*Q. What about the availability of recycled material and by-products of industry for use in teacher center projects?*

**A.** One often sees recycled material—by products of industry—and other scraps in teacher centers. The use of this material can be creative, but it can also easily become a gimmick—a fad. Some examples of materials that are useful in the classroom are pieces of Styrofoam, bottle caps, and discs. These can be used, for example, in art projects as manipulative objects for learning arithmetic, or for making games. They can also be used for decorations and for making furniture. The tubes that are left after newsprint has been unrolled can be converted into room dividers, storage space, waste baskets, gable legs, and chairs, for example. These are good resources to use, but sometimes teachers become preoccupied with the compulsion to use every by-product. They become "scrounge silly." When recycling becomes an end in itself, things with no purpose are collected. Teachers and students can gain a lot when they reconsider the things that are usually considered discardable. They often discover, in fact, that they are useful. Through the processes of scrounging, collecting, recycling, it becomes apparent that it is useful and advantageous to re-view the familiar in new and different ways.

**Q.** *How can the diverse needs of teachers at different stages in their careers be met? How can centers be established and operated so that they are useful to all kinds of teachers, as well as other members of the community?*

**A.** The label "teacher center" suggests that the center is exclusively for teachers. Teachers don't operate in a vacuum. Parents and school administrators should be interested in and participate in their local teacher centers. It's also important for people in business and industry to visit a teacher center in order to get a better grasp of the kinds of problems teachers are wrestling with. In short, a wide spectrum of users and visitors will increase support for the center.

Certainly teacher centers ought to be concerned with teachers at all different stages of their development, if we agree with the assumption that learning about teaching is a career-long endeavor. Teacher centers can serve teachers at all stages of their careers in very practical, hands-on, pragmatic ways.

There's a danger that teacher centers will be viewed as a panacea

when, in fact, they can never be all things to all people in all areas. If you ask people in teacher centers how many teachers in the service area come to the center, they will usually answer "a small number." Very few centers can claim that 50% or more of the teachers in the service area are served. And yet those who do come tend to come back again and again. It may be that teacher centers, if they're going to remain voluntary activities, should not be expected to serve more than a minority of the teachers. That is one of the questions that should be discussed and examined as we begin to establish government-supported teacher centers.

*Q. At what price federal support?*

A. Many people who are excited about federal funding for teacher centers are going to be very careful about requesting money if their goals and purposes might be compromised by federal regulations. That's why the philosophy behind the establishment of teacher centers must be carefully articulated. As long as the creation of teacher centers was only an idea, people could look upon them as a panacea for solving inservice education problems. We must be cautious about having higher expectations for teacher centers than they are able to fulfill.

*Q. How can teacher center advisors help teachers to relate what is going on in the center to their classroom instruction?*

A. One of the most important features of teacher centers is the concept of advisors who help provide the link between activities that take place in a teacher center and practice in the schools. Advisors are not administrators, not line people. They are not threatening to teachers. In teacher education there has always been much attention given to theory but no support or feedback systems when teachers actually get back to working with students. Advisors can provide the link between theory and practice. When we talk about teacher center staff, we need to distinguish between people who have power over teachers (that is, evaluation responsibilities) and those who do not. Both could support teachers and facilitate linkage between learning in a teacher center and application in schools. But those who don't have authority and power over teachers are in much better positions to assist teachers and get them to open up about their problems.

*Q. What is the role of teacher center governing boards? How can they represent the constituency?*

A. If teachers are the primary users of federally established teacher centers, the teachers who use the center should control its function and program. The federal teacher center program does provide six options for selecting teacher members of policy boards, all of them designed to insure that the policy board will represent teachers.

Teachers will probably be the main users of any teacher center. Regulations for federally funded teacher centers require local policy boards to decide who will use a local teacher center. For purposes of governance, you have to look at what teachers and others use the teacher center for. If the center is used to help the individual satisfy his or her own instructional or curriculum needs, that is one kind of function, obviously based on what teachers want. If a center is going to respond to the demands of a total school faculty or the needs of a particular school program, one has to ask that faculty how a center can best serve it.

*Q. Should a teacher center be concerned with preservice as well as inservice education?*

A. In teacher centers it is most stimulating for people at different levels of preparation and different career levels to work together in activities. Catering to just one group, such as secondary English teachers, may be useful, but a mix of teachers of several subjects and at various levels of experience and sophistication can be even more helpful. A student teacher or intern who has the opportunity to participate in teacher center activities will have a much broader understanding of curriculum and instruction issues than is possible when working only with a critic teacher. An interesting blend of roles and shared experiences emerges when administrators, teachers, student teachers, teacher aides, and other school personnel are served in a teacher center where rank and hierarchy do not matter. The teacher center is neutral territory that can be a rich learning laboratory for students in preservice teacher education programs.

*Q. Where is the place for scholarly pursuits and subject matter in a teacher center?*

A. One of the problems of teacher centers is that people who are serious about scholarship tend to think of them as "make-and-take" places involving hands-on kinds of activities, instant learning, and other gimmicks. For example, you can learn bookbinding one day and the next day you're an authority on the subject and teach it to the whole district. However, when teachers have had longer exposure to teacher centers, there is evidence that they delve more deeply into substantive areas. This is illustrated by some of the activities in places like the Learning Exchange in Kansas City, Missouri, where teachers developed units on economic education, the "Unseen City," and the uses of culture and art in the community-at-large. In the Teachers' Shelter in Oakland, California, there is an effort to respond to second-year teacher needs, third-year needs, fourth-year needs, and so on. In some Boston area teacher centers, teachers are spending a lot of time with record keeping and documentation of what is going on in their classrooms. Teachers bring these kinds of information to a weekly seminar that studies, for example, children's thinking. Still others share case studies compiled over a period of time on a particular child; the group discusses each case and offers advice on how a teacher can prepare for and work with that child.

These in-depth kinds of activities usually don't happen at first, they evolve over time. What has to be guarded against is falling into the academic ritual that goes on in traditional college extension and graduate courses. Certain elements of the hands-on notion must be maintained; that is, teachers must be heavily involved in determining what is being studied, and the substance of what is being studied must be internalized by the teacher rather than distilled by the professor and then passed on in lectures.

*Q. To what extent can evaluation become an integral part of teacher center operation?*

A. Evaluation is essential, whether to justify the expenditure of federal, state, or local funds, or the use of teachers' time or other resources. Centers have an obligation to be able to demonstrate that the money or time or effort has been well spent. But evaluation is also an obligation that one imposes upon oneself in order to get a clearer

understanding of what one is doing or trying to do. People should take stock to see whether what has happened was worth the effort and to determine where to go on from there.

In organizing a teacher center one shouldn't first plan, and then operate, and then evaluate; rather one should plan, operate, and evaluate all the time. Evaluation includes not only surveys and written reports but also photographs, slides, and sound-synchronized filmstrips. The idea is to create and keep all kinds of evidence of where people have gotten to at a given point.

One of the cautions, however, is that evaluation should not attempt to determine the effects of teacher center activities on things that are too remote from those activities. For example, some people suggest that a teacher center activity be evaluated on the basis of what students learn in school classrooms as measured by standardized tests or other kinds of tests. Better, one should look for evidence of what is different in a school as a result of what teachers do in a teacher center. Rather than look at direct relationships between teacher center activity and student achievement, examine, for example, a teacher who identifies a problem in reading and comes to a center for assistance. There will be an advisor there who helps the teacher analyze the problem and may even visit the teacher in his classroom. The teacher then returns to the center and, with assistance from the advisor, begins an activity that may alter the way in which he teaches reading. He may change the kinds of materials he uses, the way he groups the youngsters, or the style of interaction between himself and the students. Any of these factors may contribute to a positive change in reading instruction and in the kinds of relationships that exist in his classroom. If this teacher's experiences have been documented, there will be ample evidence that something is happening in the teacher center.

Another example is the faculty that is concerned about the social and psychological climate of its school, the nature of the rules governing the school, and maybe even the oppression it feels. Faculty members will often take these concerns to a teacher center where they begin to work them out. The center, then, helps them draw on appropriate resources in the community, such as psychologists, psychiatrists, and human relations workers. Gradually, they begin to alter the whole



school culture that they and their students live in. They begin to understand the way they treat one another and the way they treat youngsters. There are open discussions in which youngsters get involved and deliberate efforts are made to improve the quality of life in all aspects of school—intellectual, social, aesthetic. If all of these activities are documented, there will be good evidence of the achievements of a teacher center.

Another kind of evaluation, of course, is external evaluation, which is sometimes done very deliberately by bringing in an outside team of impartial people who have some expertise in the area. For external evaluation to be useful, the teacher center staff must want to get some feedback and be ready to put it to use. Evaluation is probably most profitable when it is sought by the people who run the center.

*Q. What can be undertaken in preparation for setting up a teacher center?*

A. Getting ready for a teacher center is a straightforward job if you believe that a center is to respond to the needs of teachers. This means you take the usual steps and ask the basic questions you would in preparing for a trip with a number of other people: Where are we going? What are we going to take with us? What agreements are we going to have? What agreements must we develop as we move along that will enable us to get where we want to go? What resources do we need to make our activities useful in our teaching?

It's not much different from planning anything else. Some interested people get together, try to find out what everyone wants the center to do, suggest some ideas that seem to be of general interest, and find the community resources to help the center to reach its goals. Teacher center staff become insatiable scroungers for somebody in the community whose talent and experience can be tapped.

If a teacher center is going to be something different from traditional inservice education, it has to have some different qualities, some of which we have tried to outline in this fastback. If a teacher center is going to remain viable, it has to continue to have distinguishing qualities, and centers must offer services that are not found in any other place.

## Descriptions of Three Teacher Centers

The descriptions of three functioning teacher centers that follow provide a brief view of how they operate and how they are serving the inservice needs of teachers and others in the communities where they are located. Each is distinct in terms of its functions, governance, and financing, yet all are characterized by a spirit of innovation and creativity. These centers offer specific examples of some of the ideas discussed in the question-and-answer section of this fastback.

For descriptions of other teacher centers, consult *Teachers' Centers Exchange Directory*, by Jeanne Lance and Ruth Kreitzman. It is available from the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, 1855 Folsom St., San Francisco, CA 94103.

### **The Learning Exchange**

2720 Walnut

Kansas City, MO 64108

*(Hard painted, wall-sized graphic in the classroom/meeting room of the Learning Exchange)*

"WHAT HAPPENS IN THE CLASSROOM BETWEEN PEOPLE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN ANY CURRICULUM ASSIGNMENT, PROCEDURE, OR CONTENT. IF THE PEOPLE RELATE TO EACH OTHER IN AN ENVIRONMENT OF ACCEPTANCE AND TRUST, CONTENT AND COMPETENCE WILL GROW."

The Learning Exchange is an independent center with multiple funding sources, including grants from local foundations, businesses, individuals, memberships, and fees for workshops and services. The Exchange is an access point, a conduit for bringing together a "commonwealth of experiences" of several institutions of higher education, school districts, teacher organizations, arts institutions, the Boy Scouts of America, the Junior League, community centers, and community universities in the Greater Kansas City area. The atmosphere is spirited, creative, and supportive. The center is located in a warehouse and is organized into activity centers, learning centers, a recycle area, library, store, office space, and a classroom. The hours during the school year are 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday; in the summer the Exchange is open from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Participants are classroom teachers, parents, children, curriculum directors, principals, and teacher organizations, as well as business people and volunteers—all of whom feel, as Learning Exchange Director Gail Johnston does, "that there needs to be a friendly, optimistic organization that stands between the somewhat awesome educational bureaucracy and the individual who is wanting to become involved."

The philosophy of the Exchange is expressed in these statements:

To grow professionally, you must continually experience the learning process.

The more you learn, the less you are afraid of accountability.

The success of any inservice program is that people are motivated to learn.

A reward system (credits, increments) cannot be the rationale for inservice education.

Finding connections between one's own base of operations and that of other parties and agencies enables one to utilize opportunities and resources throughout the entire educational system.

The Exchange and its staff have limits, boundaries, and ground rules that are established, yet broad-based and flexible. Attempts are made to respond sensitively to the actual concerns of teachers (not

necessarily those first articulated). "If teachers are willing to go half way, we'll go the other half." (This is preferred to staff doing the work for teachers.) The Exchange staff is comfortable saying "We're not ready (or willing) to do x right now" and to refer users to other appropriate resources.

The Exchange was started in 1972 by two former classroom teachers. The number of staff has varied over a period of time, but there have been as many as 11 staff and 13 classroom teachers working at the Exchange. Backgrounds and experiences of the staff include: classroom teaching, architecture, graphic arts and design, political science, advertising, marketing, and sales. Each staff person is encouraged to go beyond his own work experience and formal training in developing programs and projects. Each secures his own salary through grants from funded proposals. Hiring is done by group consensus. Weekly meetings are held to share what each staff member is doing on individual projects.

A variety of workshops, courses, and seminars are developed around ideas of participants, staff, school districts, and others. The program is based on user needs and institutional strengths. There are many options for content, style, and staffing of programs. The Exchange operates on the principle that it doesn't take money to start thinking, exploring, and working. Funding is planned for after experimenting with an idea. Scholarships of \$100 for materials and resources are under consideration to help encourage teacher participation.

In its collaboration with colleges and universities, the Exchange prods itself and users (professors and teachers) to strive for an optimum balance between theory and practical experience. The collaborators agree that there need not, indeed must not, be a separation between theory and practice. Rather, it is incumbent upon researchers to transfer quickly discoveries and learnings to practitioners.

The Learning Exchange is a refuge from rules, regulations, administrators, noise, and students. It is a place where teachers can commit their time and energies to their own inservice education.

## **Teacher Center Brookline**

**88 Harvard Street**

**Brookline, MA 02146**

Muffy Paradise, director of the Teacher Center Brookline (TCB), describes it as "the creation of a community of colleagues who take each other's work seriously. . . . [T]he quality of that community is equally as important as the place, for out of the community comes program, governance, and other elements of the center."

TCB is a local public school-supported center, initiated and governed by teachers and used and supported by teachers and administrators for professional development. It is affiliated with and supported by the local teacher organization.

TCB is a small, informal, friendly place, about the size of a large room. It is housed on an upstairs balcony of the Brookline Schools Education Center. The hours are 1:30 p.m. through 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Resources include a library; curriculum display and supplies; printing, duplicating, and laminating equipment; carpentry tools; sewing machine; slide projector; and typewriter. There is a half-time staff person who is the director and resource teacher.

During 1976-77 about 250 (out of a total of about 500) teachers, directors, supervisors, and specialists used the center. The statistics indicate a leveling off of numbers of teachers using the center, but an increase in frequency by those who use it. The majority of users are K-8 teachers, with about a dozen high school faculty members making regular visits. Other participants include preservice students, aides, and daycare personnel. In addition to serving persons in the Brookline Schools, TCB works with colleges and other teacher centers, both locally and out-of-state. Participation is voluntary. There are no credits offered and no increased pay incentives or stipends.

The center is governed by a board representing all the schools, district directors, and principals, and includes the director/resource teacher. The board is aided by three standing committees: administrative, program and evaluation, and funding.

Written documents—logs, formal evaluations, and questionnaires—record the history and current use and practices of the center.

A monthly calendar informs the community about workshops, seminars, and other activities. The following is a partial inventory of offerings as described by the center:

## **Workshops and Seminars: Teacher Center Brookline, 1975-76**

### **TOOLS, ARTS, AND CRAFTS**

- Beads and Beadmaking:** Design and technology of beads and beadmaking using seed, shell, bone, clay, technological hardware, paper
- Papermaking:** Making paper from wood and rag pulp, exploring textures (adapted for classroom use in support of the language arts)
- Simple Hand Printing:** Letters and designs for hand printing made from cut erasers and recycled materials
- Replicating:** Classroom uses for hectograph, mimeograph, and thermofax processes
- Printing Press:** How to use it for multiple copies from single master
- Calligraphy:** Love and joy of letters and lettering, the disciplines of formal hands, italic, uncial, gothic, and the play of inventing, using letters as line and space

### **GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT, Teachers**

- Book Seminars:** A chance to discuss a book you've read (about what you're doing as a teacher) with others who have read it
- Record Keeping:** How to develop and personalize your record keeping so you know what you want to know and learn what you want to learn about the students, yourself, and teaching

Life Planning  
for Teachers:

Developmental Stages  
for Teachers:

Looking at Children:

Exercises for self-evaluation and direction setting

Conversations toward describing teachers' growth and development with a view toward mutual support and stimulation

Several sessions of workshops and seminars on learning to look at children's play as a means of expediting their learning and supporting their individual styles of becoming

## MUSIC AND MOVEMENT

Making Musical  
Instruments:

All about the unit, used in fourth grade with updated ideas, materials, and suggestions

Guitar Songs:

Songs for various ages

Movement and Dance:

Resources, materials, and ideas

## GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

Language Games:

K-3 - 4-6

Math Games:

K-3 - 4-6 and up

Oral Games:

Storytelling and spoken group games

Theater Games:

Group games that use no materials

Strategy Games:

Games of skill and logic

Games that Include  
Everyone:

Sixth, seventh, and eighth grades

## MISCELLANEOUS

Parties:

Lots of them regularly

Seeds:

Exploring a single piece of subject matter from many entry points (collecting, cooking, myth, story, stringing, etc.) and at many levels

**The Advisory and Learning Exchange**  
**1101 15th Street, N.W.**  
**Washington, DC 20005**

The Advisory and Learning Exchange is one of several projects operating under the nonprofit umbrella organization, Associates for Renewal in Education, Inc. (A.R.E.). The Advisory is located in a downtown office building and occupies a ground floor suite. It supports its own family of projects (for example, an Artist-in-Residence Program), as well as operating a small resource center where participants can borrow books, curriculum kits, and other materials; organizing the "Teacher's Treasure Trove" (an education store); and providing a wide range of services to a broad-based audience. Users include infant-care to post-secondary personnel, museum educators, teacher organizations, professional associations, and neighborhood and community groups. The Advisory is open Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; and Sunday for scheduled workshops.

The Advisory is heir to curriculum development and school renewal projects initiated during the sixties. Since 1971, it has offered workshops in traditional content areas, as well as in specialized areas such as bilingualism, mainstreaming, and values clarification. Courses are also offered in proposal writing; issues, problems, and strategies for juvenile justice; and teen-age pregnancy and parenthood.

The 1977-78 Advisory budget is \$100,000 with funding through various sources, including the federal government, private foundations, contracts negotiated with the District of Columbia Public Schools, fees from workshops and inservice courses, sales, and a membership dues of \$15 per individual. Membership includes 3,000 people who receive a 10% discount on college credit courses, materials from the store, and have exclusive use of the reference library.

There is a small, full-time staff and a pool of consultants who are hired on an ad hoc basis in response to user request or initiation by the Advisory. The director's salary is paid by the local school department. Decisions are made by the A.R.E. Board of Directors. Teacher committees (e.g. math, reading, science, social studies) at both elementary



and secondary levels inform the staff and board of what teachers want.

Over the years, services and types of offerings have changed. Recently the Board of Examiners of the District of Columbia Public Schools widened the opportunities for teachers to enhance their teaching abilities. The Advisory now offers approved inservice credit to teachers. It also offers college credit to those who want it for recertification or salary increment.

The present move toward offering recertification-type courses (which are mandatory for teachers) has changed the type of clientele at the Advisory and caused the users and staff to question its purpose. Now 50% of Advisory time is spent on recertification courses. The original mission of the center has thereby altered dramatically. This phenomenon highlights the fact that when centers become institutionalized, they may kill their original intentions through the need to survive.

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